

COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT REFORM

TOM DAVIS, CHAIRMAN



MEDIA ADVISORY

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Government Reform to Examine Efforts to Build 'Culture of Achievement' in D.C. Public Schools

Hearing is Superintendent Janey's First Appearance before Congress

**What: Government Reform Committee Oversight Hearing:
"Declaration of Education: Toward a Culture of Achievement
in D.C. Public Schools"**

When: FRIDAY, MAY 20, 2005 at 10:00 A.M.

Where: ROOM 2154, RAYBURN HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING

Background:

Earlier this month, the District of Columbia Public Schools Superintendent, Dr. Clifford Janey, released a new strategic plan, "Declaration of Education: Keeping our Promise to the District's Children." The strategy includes a framework to raise student achievement by retaining and training high quality teachers and principals, engaging parents and the communities, improving business operations and school facilities, and implementing new curriculum standards.

Low academic performance continues to plague DCPS: According to the National Assessment of Educational Progress, ten percent of 4th and 8th graders are proficient in reading. Only seven percent of 4th graders and six percent of 8th graders are proficient in math. In 2002-2003, the average D.C. Scholastic Achievement Test score was 978 while the national average is 1026.

This hearing will examine Superintendent Janey's plan, as well the current status of public education in the District of Columbia, and the factors – such as public safety and health concerns, a too-high truancy rate, and a high percentage of economically and disadvantaged students – that contribute to the District's relatively low academic performance.

Instability in the DCPS has also been a factor. Dr. Janey is the system's fifth superintendent in the past decade. Student enrollment is in a steep decline, as the number of students dropped from 78,694 in October 2001 to 61,567 two years later. Fewer families are moving into the District, and many families are finding alternatives by sending their children to charter schools or private schools (including through the federal D.C. Opportunity Scholarship program that provides scholarships to private schools in the District.).

WITNESSES

Panel One:

Mr. Robert C. Bobb, Deputy Mayor/City Administrator, Government of the District of Columbia

The Honorable Kathleen Patterson, Chairperson, Committee on Education, Libraries, and Recreation, Council of the District of Columbia

Dr. Clifford B. Janey, Superintendent, District of Columbia Public Schools

Ms. Peggy Cooper Cafritz, President, District of Columbia Board of Education

Mr. Charles Ramsey, Chief of Police, Metropolitan Police Department

Ms. Brenda Donald Walker, Director, Child and Family Services Agency

Panel Two:

Mr. Jason Kamras, National Teacher of the Year, District of Columbia Public Schools

Ms. Iris Toyer, Chair, Parents United for the District of Columbia Public Schools

Ms. Carolyn Dallas, Executive Director, Youth Court